

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (Previously Presented) A method of providing a circle of trust comprising:
 - receiving a first certificate of a first server by a second server;
 - storing said first certificate of said first server in a first trusted partner list accessible by said second server;
 - receiving a second certificate of said second server by said first server; and
 - storing said second certificate of said second server in a second trusted partner list accessible by said first server,wherein access by a client to a resource associated with said first server is controlled as a function of said first trusted partner list.
2. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 1 further comprising:
 - initiating use of said resource by said client, wherein an authentication assertion reference is provided by said client;
 - determining an identity of said second server as a function of said authentication assertion reference;
 - sending an authentication request containing said first certificate of said first server to said second server;
 - determining if said first certificate is contained in said first trusted partner list of said second server;
 - sending an authentication assertion indicating that said client has been authenticated, from said second server to said first server when said first certificate is contained in said first trusted partner list of said second server;
 - sending an authentication assertion, indicating that said client has not been authenticated, from said second server to said first server when said first certificate is not contained in said first trusted partner list of said second server; and

providing said resource to said client by said first server when said authentication assertion indicates that said client has been authenticated.

3. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 2, further comprising:

logging-on to said second server by said client; and
authenticating said client by said second server.

4. – 7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously Presented) A method of providing a circle of trust comprising:

initiating use of a resource associated with a relying server by a client, wherein an authentication assertion reference is provided by said a client to said relying server, and wherein said authentication assertion reference is provided to said client by an issuing server;

determining an identity of said issuing server as a function of said authentication assertion reference;

sending] a first authentication request comprising a certificate of said relying server to said issuing server;

determining if said certificate is contained in a trusted partner list of said issuing server;

sending an authentication assertion, indicating that said client has been authenticated, from said issuing server to said relying server when said certificate is contained in said trusted partner list of said issuing server;

sending an authentication assertion, indicating that said client has not been authenticated, from said issuing server to said relying server when said certificate is not contained in said trusted partner list of said issuing server;
and

providing said resource to said client by said relying server when said authentication assertion indicates that said client has been authenticated.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Canceled)
11. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 8, further comprising:
 logging-on to an issuing server by said client; and
 authenticating said client by said issuing server.
12. (Previously Presented) A system for providing a circle of trust comprising:
 a first server comprising:
 a first administration module; and
 a first trusted partner list communicatively coupled to said first administration module; and
 a second server comprising:
 a second administration module; and
 a second trusted partner list communicatively coupled to said second administration module,
 wherein access by a client to a resource associated with said first server is controlled as a function of said second trusted partner list.
13. (Previously Presented) The system for providing a circle of trust according to claim 12, wherein said first administration module receives a credential of said second server.
14. (Previously Presented) The system for providing a circle of trust according to claim 13, wherein said first administration module stores said credential of said second server in said first trusted partner list.
15. (Original) The system for providing a circle of trust according to Claim 14, wherein said credential comprises a certificate.
16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) The system for providing a circle of trust according to Claim 12, further comprising:
- said client;
 - said first server communicatively coupled to said client and said second server, wherein said first server further comprises:
 - a first session module; and
 - a first authentication module; and
 - said second server communicatively coupled to said client and said first server, wherein said second server further comprises:
 - a second session module; and
 - a second authentication module.
18. (Previously Presented) The system for providing a circle of trust according to Claim 17, wherein said second session module determines an identity of said first server as a function of an authentication assertion reference received from said client.
19. (Previously Presented) The system for providing a circle of trust according to Claim 17, wherein said first session module determines a trusted status of said second server as a function of a certificate received from said second session module.
20. (Canceled)
21. (Canceled)
22. (Previously Presented) The system for providing a circle of trust according to Claim 17, wherein said first session module provides for secure transfer of information for authenticating said client.
23. (Original) The system for providing a circle of trust according to Claim 22, wherein said first session module generates and processes SAML requests and assertions contained in SOAP envelopes.

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24. (Canceled)

25. (Canceled)

26. (Canceled)

27. – 36. (Canceled)